

LOUISIANA JUVENILE JUSTICE AT THE CROSSROADS

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CHAPTER ONE

LOUISIANA JUVENILE JUSTICE AT THE CROSSROADS

Purpose of this Report

Louisiana faces an unprecedented opportunity to mobilize all three branches of government to improve its youth corrections system. The goal of this report is to help Louisiana continue to take advantage of this opportunity through planning and implementing effective responses to the problems of juvenile delinquency.

This report, conducted with financial support from the Public Welfare Foundation and through a contract with the Office of Juvenile Services, is guided by NCCD's previous research and experience in Utah, Massachusetts and Maryland. In these states, juvenile corrections consists of a network of small secure programs for the dangerous few, and a broad diversity of community-based sanctions for most juvenile offenders. Key elements of this approach include (1) decentralization of juvenile services, (2) objective classification based on risks and needs, (3) continuous case management and (4) extensive contracting with private sector agencies that provide the bulk of placements and services. It is NCCD's belief that Louisiana can, should, and will create a similar system.

Context of this Study

Louisiana already has made significant progress in juvenile justice reform as reflected in a historical review excerpted from the OJS's 1989 Report to the United States District Court.

A "justice" system for youth began emerging in Louisiana in the early 1900's with the opening of Louisiana Training Institute at Monroe in 1904, the State Industrial School for Girl at Ball in 1928 and the State Industrial School for Colored Youth in Baton Rouge in 1936. Generally, the majority of youth committed to the schools were what we refer to today as in-need-of-care and in-need-of-supervision children. Youth who committed serious offenses, referred to as delinquent today, were sentenced to jails and prisons through the late 1940's.

During the 1940's and 1950's, professionals across the country, as well as throughout Louisiana, began calling for the removal of the in-need-of-care child and the emotionally disturbed or mentally retarded child from these institutions. During these years the schools began receiving more and more youth who actually needed behavior "correcting" requiring treatment and rehabilitation rather than merely "training" for adulthood.

The call was to go unheeded for nearly three decades as the institutions overflowed with youth ranging from the abandoned child, to the truant or runaway, to the arsonist and murderer. During the 1960's, the population of what is now LTI-East Baton Rouge alone rose to 1,500. Throughout the schools, youth were sleeping on floors, in hallways, in closets or under the bed of another.

These same professionals also began looking for avenues to remedy the fragmentation of services for youth such as probation, parole, training schools and other programs which were spread among several State and local agencies.

During the 1960's community group homes began to develop across the State and were part of the Department of Public Welfare as was juvenile probation and parole. The training schools had been merged into the Department of Institutions. The bringing of the three major providers of services for youth under the same umbrella would take another 25 years.

During these years, the placement of youth was basically determined by the judiciary as they determined which agency the youth would be committed to. The courts' ability to commit to a specific institution was lost when the Department of Corrections, in 1970, opened the Juvenile Reception and Diagnostic Center for the

purpose of determining the needs of youth committed to its care and the institution that could best address those needs.

In 1975, Louisiana became a signatory to the federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act, pledging to remove status offenders from the training schools. However, the populations did not significantly decrease as judges with juvenile jurisdiction, using the violation of a valid court order offense, simply began adjudicating youth as delinquent rather than as status offenders and committed them to the custody of the Department of Corrections which operated on the training schools.

The Federal Court initially intervened in the early 1980's to cap the rising numbers at the State's training schools using health and fire standards. As the judiciary determined placement by determining the agency of commitment, this cap was only partially effective. The pressure to crowd more children into the already overcrowded, inadequately staffed and deteriorating physical plants continued.

In 1984, the United States District Court, Middle District of Louisiana, signed a Consent Decree with the State capping the juvenile institutional populations at 850 based on (1) fire and safety standards; (2) minimum staffing requirements for effective treatment and rehabilitation; and, (3) safety of the offenders, staff and public. The training school population became strictly tied to the State government's ability and willingness to pay for adequate staff and related services.

Also in 1984, the Legislature agreed that fragmentation of services must end. On January 1, 1985, the Division of Youth Services, responsible for juvenile probation, parole and placement (in group homes), was transferred to the Office of Juvenile Services. The judiciary continued its tradition of determining the placement needs of youth by issuing orders such as "...committed to the Department of Public Safety and Corrections for placement in..."¹

With the assistance of NCCD, the Office of Juvenile Services developed a classification system to determine the needs of each youth committed to its care as well as the risk that child presents to himself and the public.

¹ Report to the United States District Court, Middle District of Louisiana, October 1989, prepared by the Office of Juvenile Services.

The Office of Juvenile Services began to redesign institutional and community residential programs to provide specific services for specific populations. Between 1984 and 1989, alternative program redesign or development included independent living programs, professional home care, non-residential day treatment, electronic monitoring, family preservation, volunteer mentoring programs, a wilderness program, and the STOP program at LTI-Bridge City.

The 1987 Legislature agreed that to ensure a youth was placed in an appropriate program that would serve his or her individual needs and the youth would have the ability to move to a less restrictive (and less expensive) program in a timely manner, the Office of Juvenile Services needed to have sole authority for placement of, programming for and services for youth placed in its custody by the judiciary.

Yet, in September of 1988, a technical assistance consultant wrote, "The (OJS) is empowered to place youth in lesser restrictive settings... but judicial expectation minimizes these placements and requires that diversion be handled with great discretion. The judicial expectation has created a system that is overcrowded..."²

The Office of Juvenile Services worked consistently to improve conditions in the LTIs and to create a significant network of community-based programs. These efforts resulted in a 25 percent decline in admissions to the LTIs. However, progress toward a system of community-based care slowed as Louisiana faced a severe fiscal crisis due to recessions in key industries such as oil, natural gas and agriculture. State agencies, including OJS, faced major cutbacks in their budgets. Concurrently, the national concern over drug abuse impacted Louisiana's juvenile justice system. Juvenile arrests increased, as did demands for harsher punishments for youthful drug dealers.

² Report to the United States District Court, Middle District of Louisiana, October 1989, prepared by the Office of Juvenile Services.

In most states, the "get tough" movement and fiscal constraints have led to serious overcrowding in juvenile correctional facilities. However, the Federal Court Consent Decree governing the population of the LTIs prevented dangerous overcrowding from occurring. A negative consequence of the cap was a backlog of youths awaiting secure care evaluation. These youths are either residing at home, or more likely, are confined in local detention centers. These local facilities have few educational and treatment resources; they are designed for short-term confinement only. For most of 1989-1990 there were 200-250 youths on a backlog status.

The backlog has frustrated local officials and led United States District Court Judge Frank J. Polozola to require OJS to propose a remedy for the situation. On October 16, 1989, the Office of Juvenile Services presented its plan to the Court. The Court has accepted the plan as part of the legally binding Consent Decree.

Although OJS's plan stressed the need for a comprehensive and long-term solution to juvenile corrections problems, the short-term steps were significant. The state agreed to retain a nationally respected research and consulting group to develop a long-term plan to meet the secure care needs of Louisiana's troubled youth. Louisiana agreed to immediately invest \$2.5 million in the expansion of community-based placements. In fiscal year 1991-1992, the OJS budget will provide for a 33 percent increase in community-based placements. Louisiana proposed also to renovate and add

staffing to existing LTI's to increase the bed capacity by 10 percent. This will result in a system containing 940 secure beds and 955 community placements. The OJS also is pilot testing a program designed to shorten lengths of stay in the LTIs by accelerating planning for aftercare services.

In February 1990, Assistant Secretary Don Wydra wrote NCCD "requesting assistance in our continuing process of strategic planning for the future of Louisiana's juvenile justice programs... (The OJS) made a commitment to diversification of services in 1984... We have maintained this commitment and slowly implemented program diversification even during the years of... a poor economic climate... Your assistance would be an asset to use in such areas as examining the need for secure beds in the future; assessing the need for additional diversification of alternative programs; reviewing our secure screening document as it relates to public safety risk; making recommendations regarding the length of stay in both institutional and community-based programs."

The NCCD agreed to assist the OJS, and received partial support for this effort from the Public Welfare Foundation, which has a longstanding commitment to improving the care of at-risk children and adolescents nationwide.

Plan of the Report

The next chapter of this report presents a forecast of Louisiana's secure care bed needs for juvenile offenders for the next five years (1990-1995). The chapter profiles the existing LTI

population and examines the potential impact of various policy scenarios on the need for secure beds.

Chapter Three looks at youth in backlog status, those entering the LTIs, and those placed in community programs. Based on the classification study of a random sample of 515 youths committed to OJS, NCCD computed the need for secure beds using a proposed objective, public-safety oriented classification instrument. The instrument was designed by a group of juvenile justice professionals from throughout Louisiana as part of this project. The instrument is fully described later in this report.

Chapters Four and Five examine a sampling of current community-based programs, and discuss OJS policies relevant to improved placement and case management decisions.

Finally, in Chapter Six, NCCD summarizes the policy choices available to Louisiana and recommends the critical next steps OJS must take to continue improving the quality of care it provides.

As the title of this report suggests, Louisiana is truly at the crossroads in its juvenile justice reform efforts. One road leads to continued supervision by the Federal Court and repeated short-term fixes to system-wide problems. The other road leads to a new paradigm of juvenile justice that promises to advance both public safety and "the best interests of the child".

CHAPTER TWO

FORECASTING THE NEED FOR SECURE CONFINEMENT OF JUVENILE OFFENDERS

Analysis of Current Population Trends

In this section, NCCD examines current population trends and develops a series of forecasts for the five-year secure bed needs of OJS. These forecasts are extremely sensitive to policy decisions with alternative policy scenarios producing a broad range of potential secure bed needs.

To begin this analysis, it is useful to examine recent trends in the LTI population. At the end of FY 1990, there were 850 youth confined in the LTIs and an additional 220 held in various detention facilities awaiting secure care evaluation. These figures have remained fairly constant over the past 12 months. Of the 850 juveniles in the LTIs, the vast majority (95 percent) were male and 81 percent were minority, predominately African-Americans. The commitment rate to LTI for minority youths is over four times that of white adolescents.

Figure 1 shows the most serious charge for which these youths were committed to OJS. The largest offense group was burglary. Violent and sex offenders compose 36 percent of the LTI residents; serious property offenders account for another 37 percent, and drug offenders make up 9 percent of the LTI group.

Over the last decade, the LTI population remained relatively stable at roughly 1,000 youth. However, following the Consent Decree in 1984, Louisiana experienced a steady growth in the number of youth held in detention awaiting secure evaluation.

Distribution of Most Serious Offenses Of LTI Confined Population

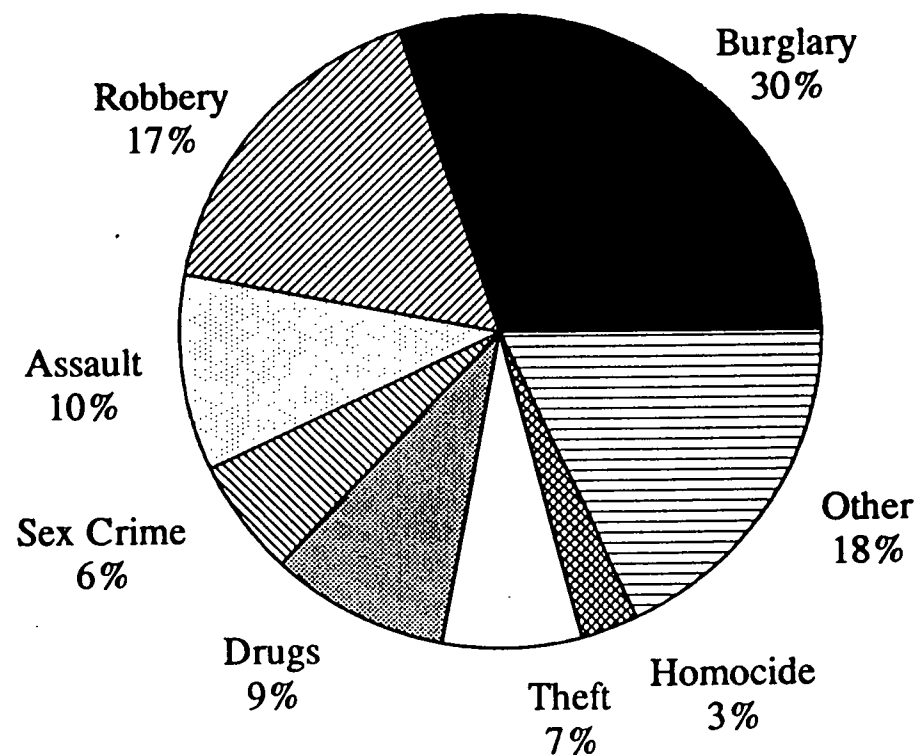


FIGURE 1

Approximately 690 youths were admitted to Louisiana's secure care system in FY 1989-1990. The average sentence for these admissions was 45.5 months. However, youth released from the LTIs in the same fiscal year with sentences of 37-48 months actually served an average of 11.3 months. The lengthy sentences probably reflect the prevailing judicial practice of sentencing youths to OJS until the age of majority (21 years old). The 11.3 months of time served is a more accurate reflection of the local "tariff of punishment" for serious juvenile offenders. Based on national data analyzed by NCCD, Louisiana's length of stay is slightly above the national average for training schools.

Upon admission to LTIs, 24 percent of youths are classified as requiring maximum custody, 51 percent are classified as medium custody and 25 percent are considered minimum custody. This initial classification is heavily determined by the severity of the commitment offense as well as the youth's prior juvenile court involvement and escape history. Custody classification determines the assignment of a youth to various LTIs and, to some extent, his placement in living units within each facility.

OJS employs a four-level offense severity scale to categorize offenses. The "Highest" group consists of violent crimes and the "High" group includes aggravated assaults, burglary and drug offenses. Simple assault and most property crimes are classified as "Moderate" in severity. The "Low" category includes petty theft and status offenses.

If one collapses the two most serious offense categories and combines the "Low" and "Moderate" groups, the following analysis is revealed (Figure 2). This analysis shows the breakdown of FY 1989-1990 admission by gender, severity of offense and custody classification level. Over half (54 percent) of the LTI admissions were in the less serious offense groups and most were classified as requiring medium or minimum custody. Similarly, with the more serious offenders, two-thirds were classified by OJS as needing minimum or medium custody.

Estimating Future Secure Bed Needs

NCCD used a computer simulation model to project the secure care population through FY 1995. This model incorporates data on demographic changes in the youth population, juvenile arrest trends, commitment rate analyzed by offense, age, gender and race, and average time served for various offense groupings.³ This projection includes youths in detention who would be in an LTI or in the JRDC if bed space were available.

To make the initial or baseline projection, NCCD gathered data on the expected growth in the youth population from the Louisiana

³ The NCCD forecasting model is more fully described in Jones, Michael and Aaron McVey, NCCD Prophet Simulation Model: an Interactive Microcomputer Simulation System, San Francisco, CA: National Council on Crime and Delinquency, 1990.

Distribution of Offense and Classification Level, By Gender LTI Admissions

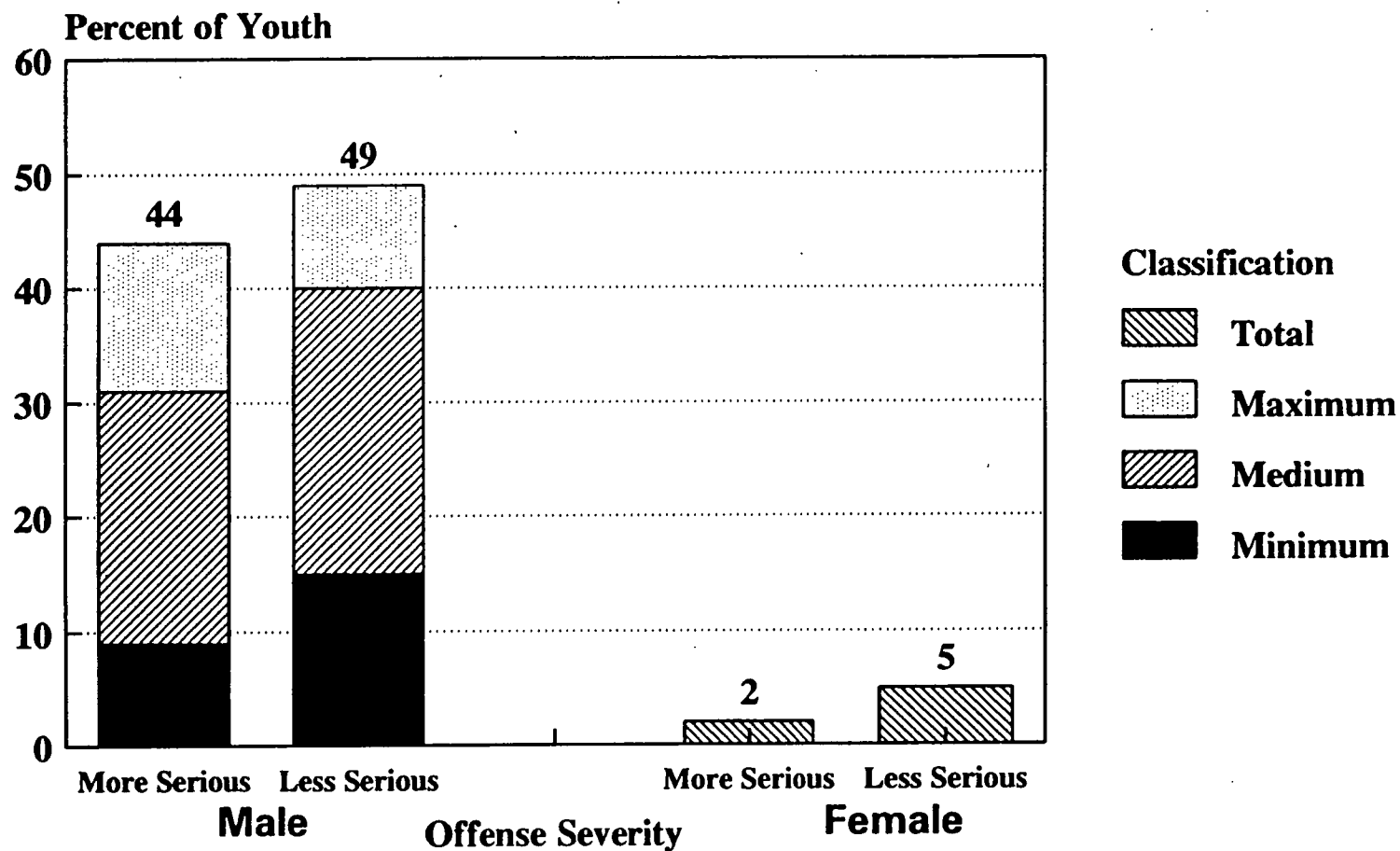


FIGURE 2

Department of Education.⁴ The baseline projection assumes future intakes are identical to the FY 1989-1990 admissions in terms of age, gender, race, and offense types. The baseline forecast also assumes that lengths of stay remain relatively constant. This forecast shows the path that OJS is following under present juvenile justice laws and policies.

At the end of FY 1989-1990, 1,070 juveniles were in secure beds or awaiting secure care evaluation. Assuming that current judicial sentencing and release policies and practices remain unchanged, the NCCD forecasting model projects this population to decline slightly during the latter part of FY 1990-1991. Thereafter, the LTI population will rise moderately through FY 1995 (Figure 3). The total project growth is 80 youths or roughly 7.5 percent of the current secure care population.

This moderate growth in the secure care population is produced by (1) a slight increase in admissions, albeit a slower growth rate than in recent years and (2) the initiation of the STOP program and other OJS programs and policies aimed at reducing lengths of stay for non-serious offenders.

Assuming no further changes by juvenile justice practitioners at all governmental levels and in all branches of government, Louisiana will need to expand its secure bed inventory by

⁴ NCCD used population data from the Louisiana Department of Education because these data appeared more accurate than estimates available from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. If Census Bureau figures are used, the Louisiana youth population is expected to decline significantly. The Department of Education statistics forecast a more stable youth population through 1995.

Louisiana Secure Facilities Actual and Projected LTI Population

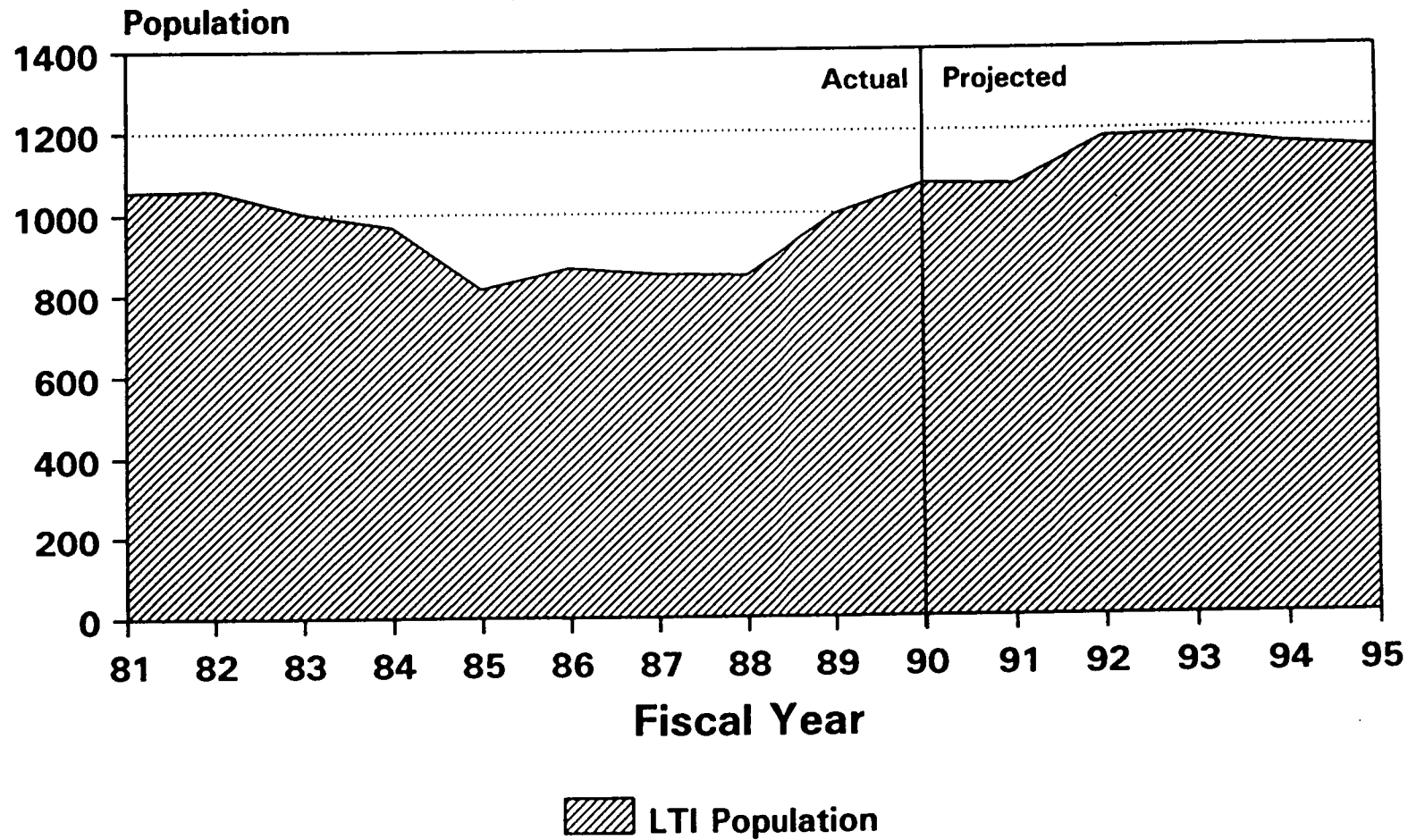


FIGURE 3

Source: Louisiana OJS

approximately 300 beds to meet this need and to eliminate the detention backlog. The estimated cost of building these additional beds is almost \$33 million.

The baseline projected need for secure beds, assuming no statutory, policy or practice changes, is 1,105 beds for males and 45 beds for females. Almost half of the beds (49 percent) would house offenders classified as medium custody. Another 26 percent would be maximum custody, and 25 percent would confine minimum custody offenders.

It is crucial to remember that this baseline forecast is dependent upon policy choices. If OJS diverts into community programs all minimum custody youths and those medium custody offenders charged with minor offenses, the secure bed needs in FY 1995 would drop to 509 beds. Alternatively, if OJS reduced the average time served in LTIs by three months, the required secure care bed needs in FY 1995 would be 873.

The Impact of Selected Policy Changes on OJS Secure Bed Needs

In a series of meetings held in early 1991, OJS top managers developed six policy options directed at reducing future secure bedspace requirements. Using the NCCD baseline forecast, each of the options was reviewed as to its probable affect on the secure care population over the next five years. The policy options are listed below:

1. Divert the lowest severity offenders from secure care.
2. Limit the secure confinement of drug offenders to 12 months.

3. Parole all property offenders 6-9 months prior to the expiration of their sentences.
4. Reassign all offenders to community placements 6-9 months prior to their maximum sentences.
5. Make the maximum sentence up to age 18 for all but the highest severity offenses.
6. Reassign to non-secure programs those offenders who are within 15 days of their classification as minimum-out.

The first two options save very few secure beds. The early release of property offenders could save as many as 72 beds. Option four broadens the early release groups and could save 94 beds. Setting age 18 as the minimum sentence for all but the most serious offenders would save 138 beds. The last option would save 122-191 beds.

Many of these options would impact overlapping offender groups. NCCD attempted to estimate the cumulative impact if OJS implemented all of the options (some require statutory authorization). The total secure bed savings would be 300-369 beds. Interestingly, this total impact is roughly equal to the forecasted need for new secure beds as noted in NCCD's baseline forecast. Put simply, OJS could avoid the need for costly new construction of additional LTI beds by implementing these modest program and policy moves.

In the next chapter, NCCD looks at the custody needs of current clients in greater detail. The analysis suggests OJS, by implementing some of the earlier options and expanding and enhancing its community-based care system, could safely phase out

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some of its existing secure care beds and still provide secure care for high risk offenders.

CHAPTER THREE

SECURITY NEEDS OF LOUISIANA'S JUVENILE OFFENDERS

In this chapter, NCCD examines the secure bed impact of a more community-based approach to juvenile offender treatment and rehabilitation.

States as diverse as Massachusetts, Utah and Missouri have converted their juvenile correctional systems to a true community-based model. In each of these states, the dangerous few are managed in small, secure, staff-intensive facilities, typically no more than 30 beds each. The balance of offenders are supervised in a continuum of placements including staff secure facilities, specialized group homes, day treatment programs and intensive supervision programs. Research has shown that the community-based systems are more cost-effective and protect public safety better than traditional approaches.⁵

Each of the community-based states employs standardized classification systems to identify those youths who require secure confinement. To complete the analysis of the Louisiana juvenile offender population, NCCD worked with a small task force of juvenile justice officials to develop an objective classification (or risk screening) instrument. The task force included representatives of the judiciary, law enforcement and OJS

⁵ Krisberg, Barry; James Austin and Patricia A. Steele, Unlocking Juvenile Corrections: Evaluating the Massachusetts Department of Youth Services, NCCD, San Francisco, 1989 and Austin, James, Karen Joe, Barry Krisberg and Patricia A. Steele, The Impact of Juvenile Court Sanctions: A Court that Works, NCCD, San Francisco, 1990.

management staff. The screening tool they agreed upon is presented as Exhibit 1.

The Louisiana screening instrument is properly focused on public safety considerations. The severity of the current offense as well as the extent of the youth's delinquent history are heavily weighted. In addition, the screening document considers the youth's behavior in prior in-home and placement settings.

Youths scoring 6 or fewer points are assumed to be eligible for community placement; those with scores of 7 or 8 are assumed to be candidates for a 90-day secure program, followed by community placement. Youths scoring 9 points or above are designated as secure care cases.

This instrument was applied to (1) all youths in backlog status and (2) a random sample of youths entering LTIs and non-secure placements over the previous eight months. In all, 515 cases were coded by OJS staff using the NCCD classification instrument. The coders were permitted to "override" the score if they believed the points did not match the actual risk level presented by the youth. Very few cases resulted in overrides, suggesting the staff felt comfortable with the validity of the risk scores.

Figure 4 summarizes the data for the backlog population. The classification instrument placed 23 percent of the backlog youths in secure beds. Another 13 percent of these youths scored for the short-term secure program. The vast majority, 64 percent of the backlog population, was classified for non-secure placement.

**OFFICE OF JUVENILE SERVICES
SECURE CUSTODY SCREENING DOCUMENT**

Offender: _____ DOB: _____ JIRMS NO. _____

Present Adjudicated Offense: _____ Date of Disposition: _____

RECORD OF OFFENSES

SCORE _____

1. Severity of Present Adjudicated Offense ()

Level "0" Felony --- (10)	Level "3" Felony --- (3)
Level "1" Felony --- (7)	Level "4" Felony --- (1)
Level "2" Felony --- (5)	Any Other Offense --- (0)
2. If present adjudication involves: ()
 - Possession/Use of Firearm -- ADD (2)
 - Multiple Felonies -- ADD (2)
3. Number of Prior Adjudications ()
 - Two or More Felony Adjudications -- (2)
 - One Felony or Two or More Misdemeanors -- (1)
 - None -- (0)
4. Most Serious Prior Adjudication ()
 - Level "0" or Level "1" Felony -- (5)
 - Level "2" Felony -- (3)
 - Level "3" or below -- (0)
5. FOR OFFENDERS WITH PRIOR ADJUDICATIONS ()
 - Age at First Adjudication:
 - Age 13 or younger -- (2)
 - Age 14 up to 15 -- (1)
 - Age 15 and older -- (0)

RECORD OF INTERVENTION

SCORE _____

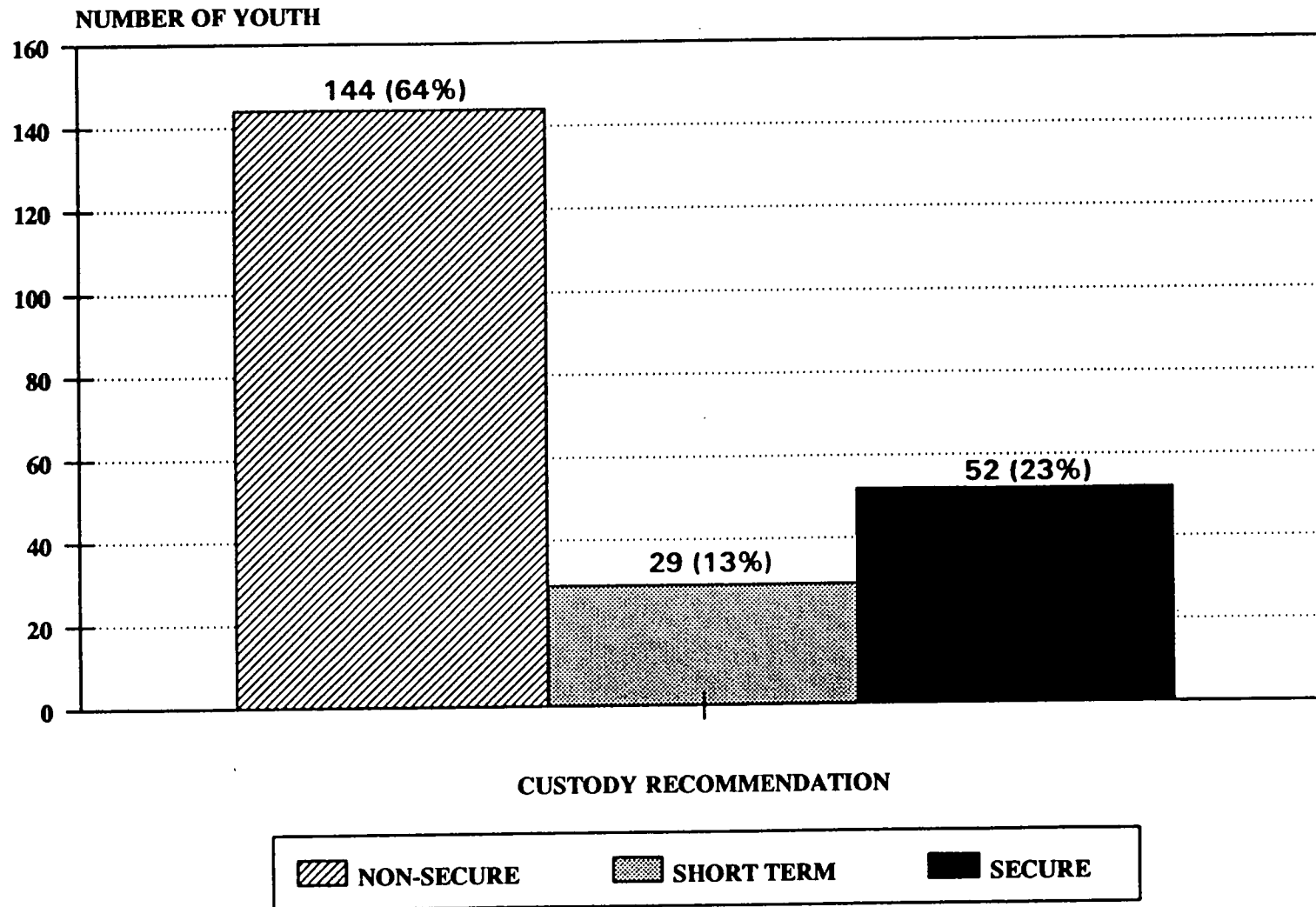
6. History of Probation/Parole Supervision ()
 - Offender Currently on Probation/Parole -- (2)
 - Offender With Probation/Parole Revocation -- (1)
 - None -- (0)
7. History of In-Home/Non-Secure Residential Intervention ()
 - Three or more prior failure -- (3)
 - One or Two prior failures -- (1)
 - None -- (0)
8. If the Offender had a Prior Secure Placement in OJS ()
 - ADD -- (2)
9. Prior Escapes or Runaways ()
 - From Secure Facility More than Once -- (3)
 - From Secure Facility Once -- (2)
 - From Non-Secure Facility Two or More Times -- (2)
 - From Non-Secure Facility Once -- (1)
 - None -- (0)

TOTAL SCORE (Items 1 - 9): _____

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

If Total Score is 0-6, consider non-secure placement.
 If Total Score is 7-8, consider short-term secure placement.
 If Total Score is 9 or above, consider secure placement.

WAITING LIST POPULATION CUSTODY RECOMMENDATION



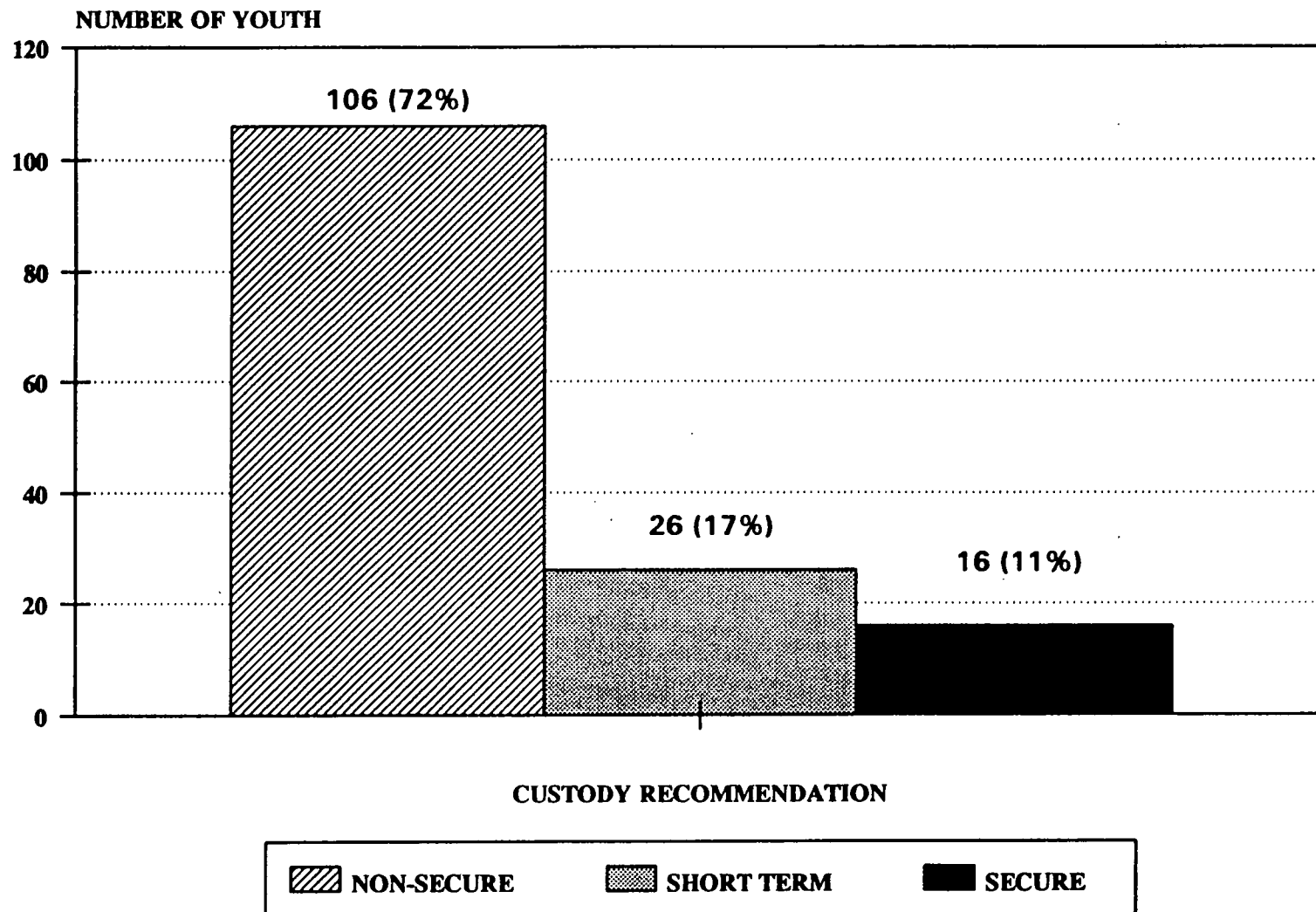
Based on a Random Sample of OJS Youth

FIGURE 4

NCCD then applied the classification instrument to a random sample of youths who went through the Juvenile Reception and Diagnostic Center (JRDC) and were subsequently placed in community programs. Figure 5 summarized the classification scores for these youths. This analysis suggests that current OJS community placements are consistent with public safety considerations. The vast majority of community placements (72 percent) scored less than six points on the NCCD classification instrument. Approximately 17 percent were classified as eligible for a short-term secure placement. However, 11 percent of those youths placed in the community scored high enough to be considered for secure care. A closer analysis of this latter group might reveal mitigating factors that led OJS staff to "override" the classification decision. This would not be uncommon. In Massachusetts, roughly 25 percent of those youth eligible for secure confinement are actually placed in community-based programs based on the clinical judgements of a departmental classification team.

Finally, and most interestingly, when NCCD scored a random sample of a nine-month period's worth of admissions to the LTIs, only 46 percent of this group was classified as needing secure care. Another 19 percent scored for short-term secure care. Thirty-five percent scored for community placement (Figure 6). This suggests that based on objective, public safety criteria, many youths in secure care beds could be better served in short-term secure or community programs.

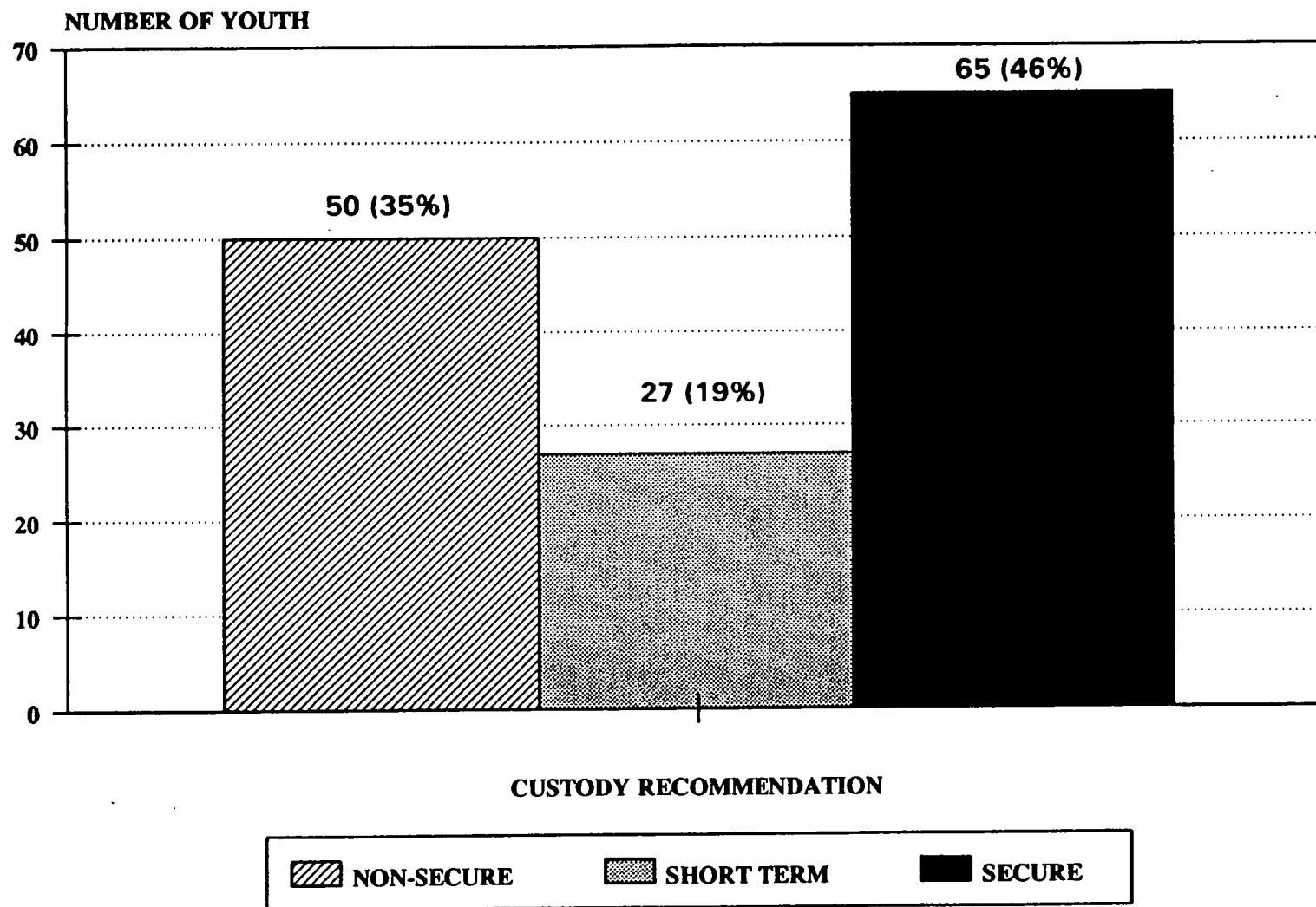
NON-SECURE POPULATION CUSTODY RECOMMENDATION



Based on a Random Sample of OJS Youth

FIGURE 5

LTI POPULATION CUSTODY RECOMMENDATION



Based on a Random Sample of OJS Youth

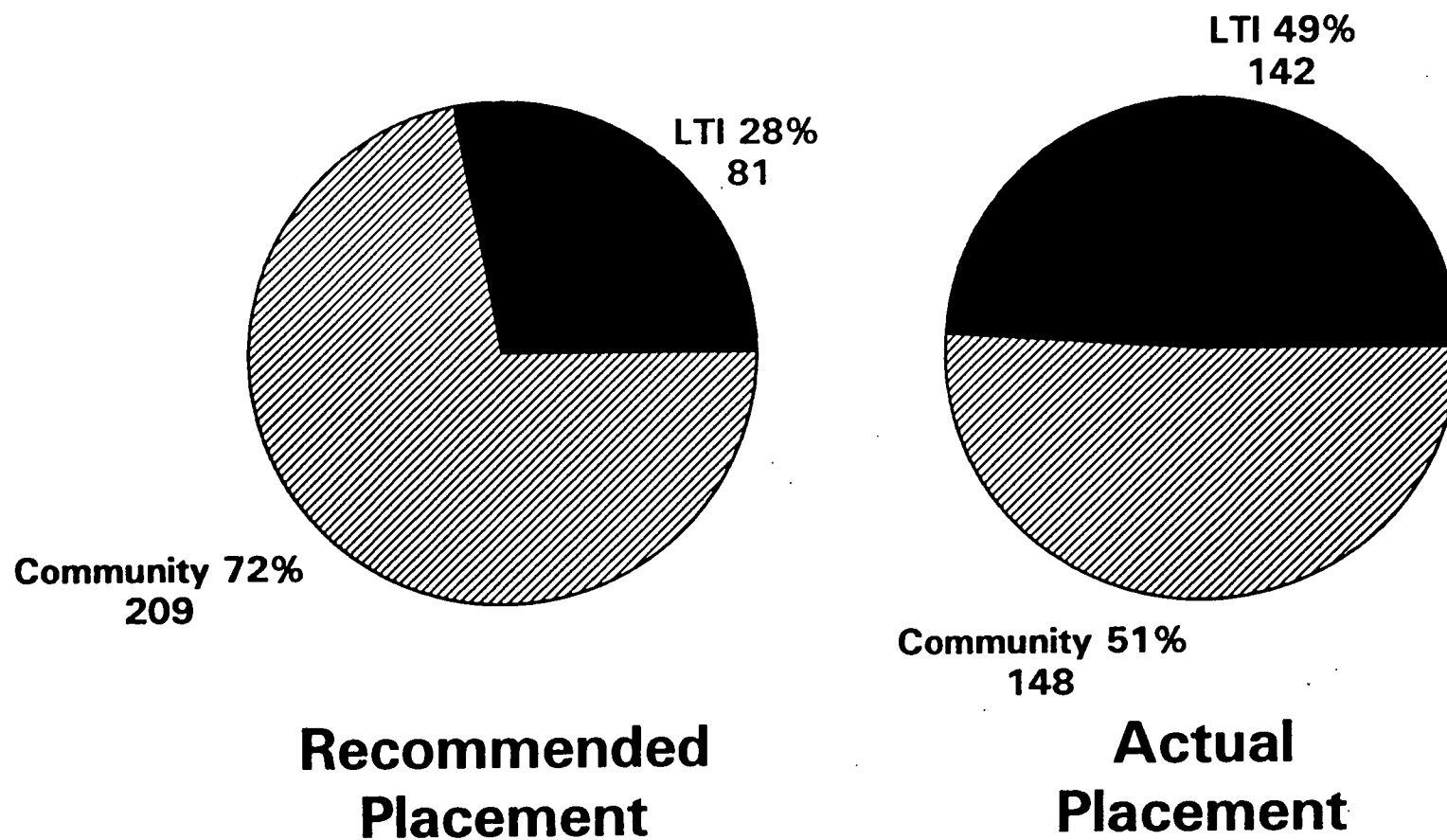
FIGURE 6

The impact on the OJS secure bed needs can be seen in Figure 7. This figure documents the recommended versus the actual placement of the sample of youths who were placed in JRDC. At present, 49 percent of these offenders are placed in an LTI, but the NCCD classification instrument recommends only 28 percent for long-term LTI placement.

This analysis is further refined in Figure 8. If one assumes that 690 youths per year will enter JRDC and that there are 220 youths awaiting secure care evaluation, then revised secure care bed needs can be computed based on the results of the NCCD classification study. NCCD's findings suggest that OJS receives 367 youths per year requiring long-term secure confinement; 159 needing short-term secure care and 384 requiring community placement. If one assumes a 12 month stay for secure cases, 3 months for short-term and one month for community placement, the annual need for secure care beds is 439. This is almost half the current population of the LTIs.

To be prudent, Louisiana may wish to operate up to 500 beds to account for slightly longer terms for very serious offenders. Use of the NCCD classification instrument to determine secure care placement based on objective, public safety standards can be expected to have significant impact on the costs of secure care for the State. Monies saved by closing existing LTIs could be re-programmed to "front end" preventive programs as well as to improved secure care facilities, programming, and aftercare services. Prevention and aftercare service strategies have

Recommended v. Actual Placements



Recommendation based on NCCD
Classification Tool

FIGURE 8

LOUISIANA FORECASTED SECURE BED NEEDS*

	<u>LTI Admits</u>	<u>Waiting List</u>	<u>Total</u>
Secure	316	51	367
Short-term	131	28	159
Non-secure	243	141	384

<u>Bed Needs</u>				
<u>Custody Level</u>	<u># of youths</u>		<u>Expected LOS</u>	<u># of Annualized Beds</u>
Secure	367	x	12 mos.	367
Short-term Secure	159	x	3 mos.	40
Community Beds	384	x	1 mos.	<u>32</u>
				439

* Assumes 690 admissions per year and 220 youths in backlog status.

repeatedly demonstrated their high payoffs in terms of reduced youth crime.⁶

⁶ Krisberg, Barry, James Austin and Patricia A. Steele, Unlocking Juvenile Corrections: Evaluating the Massachusetts Department of Youth Services, NCCD, San Francisco, 1989.

CHAPTER FOUR

COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAM ISSUES IN LOUISIANA

This chapter examines community-based programming in Louisiana. Data were collected during visits to 11 community programs throughout the state. Programs were observed in operation, and administrators, staff and clients were interviewed in depth. Follow-up discussions were conducted with some program administrators, as were conversations with some OJS Evaluation and Placement staff.

The majority of programs NCCD visited are adequately funded and run competently by enthusiastic, dedicated staff. Several of the programs are outstanding, and the recommendations which follow seek to build upon these programmatic strengths.

The Need for a Continuum of Care

A complete juvenile justice system should consist of a spectrum of placement options, with secure care at the high end, probation at the low end, and an array of community placements, both residential and non-residential, in the middle. Louisiana has made great progress in the past six years in developing a complete continuum of care. Notably, a broad diversification of program options has been created over the past several years.

A significant portion of the OJS's recommendations to the Federal Court concerned the redesign or development of this middle area of community-based programs. During the past calendar year, following the acceptance of the report by the Court, the OJS has

contracted for halfway houses for males and females, staff secure group homes for males and females, expansion of professional home care and family preservation services programs, and several other programs for specific populations of clients. Louisiana chose to develop this diversity of programs slowly over a two to three year period.

Many of these community-based program contracts went to new groups who came forward willing to participate on a partnership basis with the Office of Juvenile Services in its efforts to reform Louisiana's juvenile justice system. The single largest obstacle to getting these programs open was local zoning ordinances and the "not in my back yard" mindset of the public.

Having made significant progress toward its initial objective of establishing a broader diversity of community programs, Louisiana Office of Juvenile Services now faces the challenge of linking these programs together to create a more unified continuum of care. Many of the community-based programs function far too autonomously. They design their own schedules, counseling programs and level or behavior management systems. Unfortunately, some administrators and staff are unaware of their program's particular strengths and weaknesses in comparison with similar programs. The private sector providers appear to lack a sense of cohesiveness among themselves as a community of providers. Finally, several of the programs visited lack an understanding of the specific role they might play in the larger objective of serving OJS clients.

In order to maximize the effectiveness of community programming, the OJS should increase its efforts to develop private sector linkage on a regional basis. In addition, further efforts must be made to educate all parties in a region to the presenting problems, difficulties and existing service options available to OJS clients. In this manner, community programming can live up to its full potential in Louisiana.

Community programs play an intermediary role in a juvenile correctional system. These programs should not be viewed merely as alternatives to placement in a secure institutional setting. They should, rather, be viewed as specific rehabilitative options for specific types of clients. Louisiana's community-based programs have not yet become fully aware of their role. The OJS must continue to delineate and define these functions.

The Policy and Procedures Manual for OJS, Division of Evaluation and Placement, effective September 1, 1988, reads as follows:

"...offenders in the custody of DPSC whose classification and assessment indicate a need for treatment services in a non-secure custody setting shall be referred for placement at treatment facilities and programs appropriate to the level of care indicated."⁷

The level of care indicated, it continues,

"... will be... the least restrictive environment available and appropriate to address offenders needs and risks as determined by a case staffing."

⁷ Office of Juvenile Services, Division of Evaluation and Placement, Policy and Procedures Manual, page 4, 1988.

The wording of this second directive is acceptably vague. It allows the staff sufficient latitude in deciding what sort of treatment each youth requires. The first directive, however, is too vague. Because the term "appropriate" is undefined, staff do not have sufficient criteria for determining when a facility is or is not appropriate for a youth.

There are, of course, several manners in which to define the specific role of a given facility and provide additional placement criteria or guidelines. One method to be considered would be to rank or classify each community program in terms of client control and/or specific treatment methodologies. This particular method would, at least, provide some specific criteria for placement of youth into any given program. While these criteria would be based solely upon levels of client control or specific treatment methods, it is one manner in which the state's community programs would be delineated in a continuum of care. Once again, the OJS must now meet the challenge of closely linking these programs.

The absence of program linkage has allowed the private providers too much autonomy. As a result, the objective of the state to assign a youth to a proper treatment program is hampered. By selecting a method of classifying and linking program interventions, the OJS will have greater freedom in determining the boundaries and time frames in which community care will be delivered.

Finally, by providing a "program classification" system, the OJS will be able to assist the community-based programs to enhance

their specific treatment objectives through a reallocation of resources. For example, a particular program in north Louisiana has a significant number of youth with "gang affiliations." This program could, perhaps, be classified with gang memberships as a formal criteria for acceptance. The OJS could then develop specific staff development activities and program enhancements that would increase the program's overall effectiveness in dealing with gang members. In addition, OJS statewide would know that gang members could be referred to the program.

Recommendations:

The state can better direct its community programs through several measures.

1. In the coming months, the state should begin to clearly define its role as a procurer and purchaser of services. New emphasis should be placed on developing specific contractual agreements between the state and private providers, in which program services and target populations are strictly defined. Only in such a system will the balance of power between the state and providers be healthy and equal, with both sides accountable and responsible to each other.
2. OJS should create a "continuum of care" model. For example, by studying a sample of admissions to community programs, OJS can determine the number of remedial education placements, the number of drug counseling placements, the number of gang rehabilitation placements, etc., that are needed. Custody requirements should also

be considered. These findings will indicate what a continuum of care must contain.

3. The OJS should evaluate and classify (according to treatment and public safety criteria) all of its existing programs. It can start the process by having programs fill out extensive surveys in which the programs define their missions, their target populations, and their potential to expand their services. These responses should be critically reviewed by OJS management, which should then gather its own information about the programs. Eventually, programs should be classified by treatment and level of supervision criteria.

Once programs have been fully evaluated, a "Program Resource Manual" should be created that will act as an educational tool for state and provider staff. It should entail a description of every program, its classification, length of stay, target populations, geographic location, treatment modalities, as well as its unique characteristics.

4. By matching up the spectrum of existing programs with the ideal continuum of care, OJS can determine where the gaps in its non-secure programming exist, and can pursue the procurement of services to fill those gaps.
5. The OJS should create a "Roving Assistance Team" that will monitor programs in-depth and full-time. The Team's role would not be that of an enforcer, or a policing agent, but rather that of a trouble-spotter and information-gatherer. Teams of two people should spend a full week, twice a year, at each program. The extended period of stay will allow the programs' most subtle strengths and weaknesses to be observed; proper

evaluation is difficult during a one-day visit. The establishment of a Roving Assistance Team will guarantee OJS a supply of constantly updated information with which to ensure that the theoretical continuum of care was being fulfilled in practice. It will also serve a more general purpose. Through exposure to a wide range of programs, the teams would be able to sense system-wide trends that would otherwise go unnoticed. Such trends might include an increase in violent behavior by youth, the popularity of a new type of drug, increasing sexual acting out, or programmatic confusion about how to deal with gang members. An additional role the Roving Assessment Team could serve would be to improve programs through casual and formal suggestions given at the close of each visit.

Follow-up and Aftercare

The absence of a sufficiently coordinated aftercare system limits the positive impact of Louisiana's community programs. This lack of coordination has two aspects. First, youths are not adequately tracked after being released from community programs. Program heads have no formal mechanism through which to find out how their former clients fare after release. Second, there are few programs, such as community living, mentoring, and job counseling, that are widely available to releasees. The unfortunate result is that most programs release their clients with little hope of being able to monitor their progress or to assist them if necessary.

A second problem involves aftercare itself. When asked what programs are available to releasees, community program directors often responded that while a few youths might be placed in

community living, for the most part, youths are released outright. This is disturbing, they said, because many youths request aftercare. This situation could be avoided if more aftercare options were available.

Recommendations:

1. A follow-up system should be considered by the state, in which OJS case managers are responsible for monitoring each released youth (by telephone or through visits) every three months for at least one year following discharge. Youths' progress should be tracked, in terms of rearrest, readjudication, employment, training, education, and counseling. The results should be tabulated, with copies going to the regional office and to OJS headquarters. This will enable programs and headquarters to monitor their success rate. These data will also provide a valuable avenue of feedback that programs can use to modify their services, and OJS can use to pinpoint areas in need of improvement.
2. More aftercare programs should be created. This will be the more difficult of the two recommendations to fulfill, and will require feasibility studies, to determine both cost and logistical information. However, a long-term goal of OJS must be to institute a vibrant aftercare system. Without one, the efforts of dedicated staff at many community programs will go wasted.

Counseling

Counseling quality varied widely in the eleven programs visited. In some, counseling is excellent, occurs daily, and is

found to be meaningful by participants and staff. In others, counseling exists in name only; counselors are uninspired or dispirited, youth do not take counseling seriously, and attempts at counseling occur infrequently. Further, there are no clear qualification requirements for counseling positions at the various programs. Few programs have trained psychologists or psychiatrists on staff, although many program directors would very much like to have access to such expertise. The lack of advanced training on the part of most counselors makes it crucial that there be strict minimum counseling standards and programs set forth by the state.

Recommendations:

1. Programs might be ranked by the state according to the intensity and quality of counseling. Ranking would include a consideration of counselor credentials, access to psychiatrists, frequency of individual and group counseling, analysis of anonymous evaluations of counseling completed by client youth and by other staff, and the severity of behavioral problems at the institution. This information will be used in the "Program Resource Manual."
2. The state should set minimum goals and expectations for counseling at each program. The state should outline a basic range of counseling services that they would like programs to offer (frequency and duration of group and individual counseling, victims of sexual and physical abuse counseling, drug and alcohol addiction counseling). However, the provider community should be challenged to formulate their own set of standards. Programs should have some latitude as to how those counseling sessions

occur. This approach to the problem will allow a diverse array of counseling programs to develop in the provider community, from which placement personnel can choose, while at the same time ensuring that all programs meet minimum standards.

3. It is unlikely that the provider community will ever be in a position to hire only Masters level social workers. As such, many counselors statewide will have had only a college education, and will therefore not have had as much training as they need. As such, the state might consider exploring ways to provide ongoing education for counselors. Funding might be provided for counselors to take continuing education courses at community colleges, or for State-sponsored seminars or retreats to be offered to all interested counselors, in which outside experts would offer lectures on specific problems and the counseling community would discuss among itself issues which affect juvenile justice counseling.

Control Over Education

A major emerging issue for community-based juvenile programs is the lack of control they have over the quality of education provided to their residents. Two types of education are used by community programs. Some send their youth to the local public school. Others are provided with teachers by the local school board, and these instructors provide in-house educational services.

Each program must make its own decision about the merits and liabilities of each type of education. Youth who go to public school are able to have a more "normal" experience than those who

receive in-house education. On the other hand, in-house education allows the special needs of OJS youth to be addressed directly.

In general, it has been NCCD's experience that in-house education is preferable to public school education. Many if not most delinquent youth have failed miserably in a traditional school setting. And many have behavioral problems and learning disabilities which make instruction in a regular classroom difficult, both for themselves, the instructor, and their peers. These difficult problems are often addressed with greater success in controlled settings, by teachers trained to deal with troubled youth.

However, some challenges peculiar to Louisiana await programs which opt for in-house education. Because local parish school boards must by law provide the teachers used by a program (this enables youth to receive Carnegie points for the school work, and to progress through the education system), it is the locality, and not the program, which controls education. In many cases, this arrangement is unsatisfactory. Some teachers are not as skilled as program staff would wish. Others are unprepared for the behavioral and emotional troubles of program youth. Yet these problems cannot be addressed by the program administration. These administrators may find it frustrating to run in-house education programs over which they have little control, and to be denied the power to hire instructors of their own choosing.

Recommendation:

1. The issue of control over education will become more important as the state shifts to a community corrections framework. As such, the OJS should examine the feasibility of giving programs control over their education delivery systems. This might require modifications of the way in which Carnegie units are distributed. The OJS should keep in mind that programs will be able to deliver better education if they are given the power to modify their education programs as they see fit.

Level Systems and Behavior Modification

Most programs use a level system to structure client behavior. The level system appears to play a wide range of roles in programs. In some, they are central while in others they play a marginal role. Most seem to have been clearly worked out, and to have been modified in the light of experience. However, there are no standards for level systems against which programs are asked to compare themselves.

The behavior modification systems used in each level system vary widely. Some involve points, others a token economy, and some use actual money. But more importantly, there are two oppositional philosophies of behavior modification, both of which are used by community-based programs. Some programs emphasize the rewarding of good behavior. These give youth a positive incentive to cooperate. Others, however, allot each youth a certain number of points per

week, and deduct points for bad behavior. Here, the emphasis is on punishment, and is negative; youths have no way of earning points.

Finally, different programs appear to have very different standards of punishment. Some will penalize a youth by "dropping him a level" quite easily, and make advancement very difficult. Others try hard to help youth advance, and are reluctant to become overly punitive.

Recommendations:

1. Providers should be given latitude in designing behavior modification tools. Without latitude, the overall philosophy of the program may not be expressed in the level system. However, the state should make clear to programs that they should seek to develop, in general, behavior modification models which contain positive reward structures. Just as bad behavior is punished, so good behavior should be actively rewarded; client youth should be given the ability to earn points as well as lose them.
2. The state should monitor programs' level-dropping rates. Programs which consistently negate behavioral accomplishments of client youth should be given assistance in rethinking their level systems so as to ensure that youth can be reasonably confident that when they move up a level, they will not be pushed back down again.

Sex and Drug Education

Some community programs have special counseling services for drug addicted youth, or for youth who have been abused. Some have speakers who come every few months. Some have sex education once a year. Most others address the issue casually, when it comes up in group discussions.

Recommendation:

1. The state should make sex and drug education a required aspect of all of its community programs. For youth at risk, education is the best hope that they will avoid teenage addiction, pregnancy, and sexually transmitted diseases. To forgo an opportunity to educate youths when they are members of a captive audience would be foolish.

Education should occur frequently enough that no youth is released without education. Further, education should be conducted by people with experience. It may be too much to ask each program to institute its own education program. Perhaps one or two local counselors or teachers could be hired for the task.

Running Away Problems

Most programs do not have serious run problems. Over the six month period of July-December, 1990, most programs had one or two runaways, compared with 7-10 successful program completions, an acceptable ratio.

However, different programs understand the definition of run in different ways. Some do not report a run until 24 hours have

elapsed. Others report runs after two hours. Still others, report runs within five minutes of detection. The result is misleading data; some programs appear to be far worse than others.

The state should formally acknowledge that most youth who leave programs return voluntarily within a few hours. As such, programs should be required to report "short term AWOLs" as well as runs.

Recommendations:

1. The state should rewrite its run policy, creating a category for short term AWOLs, and clearly defining the conditions to report a runaway.
2. Runs are one of several important indices of how a program is performing. However, high run rates do not necessarily indicate programmatic failure. They may indicate a lack of resources, inadequate staffing levels, or inappropriate referrals. As such, the state should monitor run and AWOL rates for programs, and when a problem emerges, should investigate the problem to locate the cause(s) of the runs. The state should then help the program think through techniques it might use to curb the problem. Of importance is that the state not encourage programs to become obsessed with keeping run rates low at the expense of rehabilitative programs. Techniques short of locking doors, limiting activities, field trips, and nights out should be pursued.

Conclusion

Many of the community programs currently in operation in Louisiana are quite good, and all are capable of improvement. Most staff seem eager to help youth, and most are open to change. By implementing further standards and guidelines, creating the Roving Assistance Teams, and completing the evaluation system, Louisiana's community programs can function properly and effectively.

CHAPTER FIVE

ORGANIZATIONAL CONCERNS

This chapter examines a series of crucial management and policy issues which face the OJS. Observations and recommendations are based on data collected over the course of several days of site visits to Headquarters and to the New Orleans and the Monroe Regional Offices. Additional information was gathered from reports and other documents made available by OJS staff.

Development of a Comprehensive Case Management System

It has become a truism of basic management that an agency's mission and purpose should be reflected in its organizational structure. Louisiana's Office of Juvenile Service's mission is not adequately reflected in its current structure. Although the OJS has many dedicated and talented staff, the locus of responsibility for the management of individual youth's cases is diffuse. The OJS should work to create a single case management system.

In field offices, the responsibility for direct case work (probation) and placement resides in two separate administrative units. One institutional program, the diagnostic center, reports to one unit, while the rest of the institutions are overseen by another unit.

In light of this, the OJS should consider a basic reorganization of its headquarters office and regional structure that would facilitate the development of a comprehensive case management system.

Recommendation:

Continuous Case Management: In order to ensure that youth receive services that both protect the public and address individual needs, the OJS should consider a continuous case management system. Committed youth should have one local worker who has the responsibility for overseeing the delivery of the appropriate interventions from the initial classification, assessment, and treatment -- residential and non-residential -- to re-entry, aftercare and discharge.

To facilitate the development of an improved case management system, consideration should be given to reorganizing headquarters' responsibilities within three broad areas:

1. Regional Operations: This unit would have responsibility for the case management of individual cases, the development of as complete an array of local services as possible, and the management of the OJS's relationship with courts and local communities.
2. Secure Care: This unit would have responsibility for all secure institutions, public and private. This unit would ensure that all referrals to institutional services meet agreed upon criteria. The operational responsibility for the diagnostic center would be transferred to this unit. Eventually the OJS should develop smaller, local, secure/intensive care units, following the example of other states which have developed a comprehensive continuum of services (e.g. Missouri, Utah, and Massachusetts).

The OJS should seriously consider reducing its funding commitment to a centralized, institutional diagnostic unit. In reality almost all of the youth committed to

the diagnostic center are subsequently committed to one of the Office's institutions. The resources of the diagnostic center should be used both to upgrade local diagnostic services so that youth might be more appropriately matched to alternative local programs and to improve the quality of services for youth in long term care.

Similarly, the resources allocated to the short term offender program at LTI-Bridge City need to be more carefully used. Given the back-up of committed youth in secure detention (approximately 240 youth were on a "waiting list" as of 9/26/90) and the under-utilization of the short term program, either the admission criteria for this program need to change or some resources allocated to this program need to be redirected.

3. Management and Support Services. This unit would have responsibility for the budget, personnel, federal reimbursements, the development of new programs, management information systems, program monitoring and evaluation, and others.

To the degree possible, management supports such as budget allocations should be decentralized in order to support the development of a quality continuum of local services.

In order to ensure that as complete as possible a continuum of services is developed throughout the state, and that a comprehensive system of case management is developed in each region, the OJS should consider organizing its 11 regional offices into 4 larger areas (for example, the New Orleans area, the North, Central, and Southwest Areas.) The goal would be to develop a

complete continuum of services within each area. Additionally, this would ensure a continuous case management system for all committed youth that would include strong aftercare services and supervision provided the state legislature allocates sufficient staff.

Of note is that many of these recommendations have been implemented, to a degree, in the New Orleans region. At the request of Headquarters, the Regional Office decided to consolidate the placement unit with the probation service unit. Previously, the placement unit dealt only with placement while the probation office provided the services. In the new system, when the court orders placement, the probation officers have to make the placement on their own. The intent was to spread out the work load; however, probation officers who were not familiar with the placement process suddenly became in charge of tasks they knew little about. This, in turn, created pressure on them, and led to poorer quality service. Additional resources should be added to the OJS staff development programs to provide training in the topic of organizational change.

The apparent lesson is that this reform will, at first, meet with difficulties and some resistance from staff. However, NCCD believes that despite the complaints about the policy of consolidating placement with the field services, such an approach will prove to be superior in the long run, because it will force

staff to think about placement closer to the community and also provide continuity of contact.

Case by Case Oversight on Length of Stay in Residential Programs

At present the OJS has approximately 700 non-institutional service intervention slots. Most of these interventions are contracted group/residential slots. The average length of stay in these programs is 10 months, longer than many states' length of stay in training schools. At the present time, 38 percent of these slots are serving status offenders.

Recommendations:

1. Length of stay guidelines need to be implemented which ensure that residential interventions are used for more serious offenders.

Many jurisdictions have reduced their dependence on residential services by implementing a strong case management system, agreed upon length-of-stay guidelines, and the addition of a comprehensive, locally available system of non-residential services.

2. Regarding status offenders, the OJS should develop a community and family focused intervention model for non-delinquent youth who are in conflict with their families and school. Such a model might feature a progressive set of services: six months informal probation supervision, non-residential crisis intervention, family therapy, advocacy, educational supports including alternative schooling, and a short-term small residential program.

Unless the OJS develops length-of-stay guidelines for all private residential care and a clear policy regarding status offenders which limits the type of residential services and restricts the length of stay for status offenders in residential care, in all probability, the proposed expansion of alternative services will not decrease the Office's use of training schools.

Age Limits for Youth in OJS's Care

Currently the OJS cares for too many youth over the age of 18. Since all felony cases after the age of 17 originate in adult court, the outside limit for youth in the OJS should be 18 years of age.

Recommendation:

The OJS should advocate legislation that sets clear age limits for youth in its care. The only exception to the age limit of 18 should be for youth under 17 who are committed for the most serious felonies: murder, rape, arson, armed robbery, and aggravated kidnapping. Youth committed for these offenses could be maintained under OJS's supervision until their 21st birthday and could not be discharged before their 21st birthday without the approval of the committing court.

By setting a limit on the age a youth can be with the OJS, the agency will be able to concentrate its resources on developing quality programs for juvenile offenders, including local aftercare and re-entry programs.

The Need for "Performance Measures" for Both Programs and Regions

A juvenile correctional system should consist of a spectrum of placement options, and should require each program in the spectrum to define its mission in relation to the total array of options. As such, programs must be asked to compare themselves to established standards; there is no other way to ensure that a proper spectrum of placements exists.

Recommendation:

As new programs continue to be opened, the OJS needs to develop a series of "performance measures" that to the degree possible provide objective information regarding the performance of individual programs and regions. These performance indicators could include length-of-stay in residential care, objective achievement of individual youth's goals (e.g. number of youth attaining their GEDs, grade increases in reading and math, attainment of jobs), and utilization of secure care. Ideally and eventually, these and other performance indicators might be included as part of the OJS's computerized information system.

The OJS should reassess annually its service continuum and reallocate resources based on the collective needs of the youth in each region.

Creation of Secure-Care Bed Quotas for Specific Regions

Local workers all too often see secure care placement as an unlimited resource, and as the mainstay of the placement spectrum.

Recommendation:

Strong consideration should be given to allocating secure care beds to specific geographic regions or areas. Although it might take an extended period of time to develop a decentralized secure care system, the present institutional beds, including the short term STOP program, could be allocated to a specific set of regional offices. Doing this would help ensure that local workers began to see secure care as a scarce resource and only as part of the continuum of services that are available to help manage their caseloads. Out of sight would not, therefore, be out of mind. In addition, institutional workers would have a limited number of community (aftercare) workers with whom to relate. For those youth in need of secure care, re-entry planning could begin with a youth's first day in institutional care. The OJS eventually would work to decentralize the location of its secure care programs.

Conclusion

The leadership of the Office of Juvenile Services has a unique opportunity. In large measure, with additional resources, the reform promised by the merger of institutional and field services can be more fully achieved. Although final outcomes cannot be ultimately controlled or guaranteed, the recommendations outlined in this chapter are offered in the hope that they might help Louisiana better perform its ongoing responsibility to manage a changing and improving juvenile justice system.

CHAPTER SIX

CRITICAL NEXT STEPS

Louisiana is at the crossroads in its juvenile correctional system. One road leads to continued federal court supervision and repeated short-term fixes to system-wide problems. The other road leads to a new paradigm of juvenile justice that promises to advance both public safety and the "best interests of the child".

This report has suggested a variety of approaches Louisiana might take in pursuing the latter road. In making these recommendations, NCCD has drawn heavily on the experiences of other states, such as Massachusetts, Utah and Missouri, which have successfully traveled this path.

These recommendations have covered three basic areas: the use of secure placement, the structure of the community placement system, and the statutes, policies, and organization applicable to the Office of Juvenile Services. The report's major recommendations are summarized below.

Secure Placements: Policy Options

The state is faced with three distinct strategies to reduce the LTI population.

NCCD's preferred recommendation is that the OJS implement a new public safety-oriented risk assessment instrument. With the classification instrument described in Chapter Three OJS could bring its secure bed needs to 439. To be prudent, the state might want to operate up to 500 beds; this represents a 50% reduction

over current secure placements. This is clearly the most cost-effective option consistent with public safety considerations.

A second, more modest strategy, would involve a series of minor policy changes. These would include:

- a. Diverting the lowest severity offenders from secure care.
- b. Limiting the secure confinement of drug offenders to 12 months.
- c. Paroling all property offenders 6-9 months prior to the expiration of their sentences. Savings: 72 beds.
- d. Reassigning all offenders to community placements 6-9 months prior to their maximum sentence. Savings: 94 beds.
- e. Making the maximum sentence up to age 18 for all but the highest severity offenses. Savings: 138 beds.
- f. Reassigning to non-secure programs offenders within 15 days. This will help OJS exert greater control over its community programs.

The cumulative savings from these minor policy changes would be 300-369 beds.

The third and most costly option open to the state would be to build additional secure care facilities. To deal with a 7.5 percent increase of the secure care population by 1995, and to accommodate all youth on the waiting list for secure care evaluation, the OJS could expand the secure bed inventory by 300 beds, at an estimated cost of \$33 million.

Community Programming: Creating a Continuum of Care

There are a variety of steps OJS should take to strengthen its community programming, and to ensure that community programming is as effective as it can be.

1. OJS should create a "continuum of care" model, against which existing programs are matched. OJS can, in this way, determine where the gaps in its non-secure programming exist, and can pursue the creation of programs to fill those gaps.
2. OJS should establish a Roving Assistance Team to monitor programs in-depth and on a full time basis. The team would stay at and observe each program for a week at a time, twice a year. This will help OJS exert greater control over its community programs.
3. A follow-up aftercare system should be established by the state, in which youth are monitored for a year after release, and in which numerous aftercare programs are made available to the vast majority of community care graduates.
4. OJS should examine the feasibility of legislation to give community programs more control over their education delivery systems, including the power to hire and retain teachers.
5. OJS should establish standards for counseling programs, and should rank programs according to the intensity and quality of counseling.
6. The state should make sex and drug education a required aspect of all of its community programs.
7. The state should adopt a behavior management model which stresses rewards as well as punishments. This would shorten stays at LTIs and community programs.
8. The state should restructure its run-away policy.

Organizational Concerns

The OJS should take several steps to make the administration of the Office of Juvenile Services and the state's juvenile justice system more effective.

1. The OJS should advocate legislation that sets clear age limits for youth in its care; the age limit should be 18, with the exception of the most serious offenders.
2. As new community-based programs continue to be opened, the OJS should develop a series of performance measures which provide objective information regarding the performance of individual programs and regions. These performance indicators should include length of stay in residential care, objective achievement of the individual youth's goals, and utilization of secure care evaluation and placement.
3. Strong consideration should be given to allocating secure care beds to specific geographic regions or areas. A decentralized secure care system, in which a certain number of placements would be allocated to each regional office, would encourage responsible placement decision making.
4. Length of stay guidelines need to be implemented which ensure that residential interventions are used for serious offenders only.
5. The OJS should continue to expand its single case management system.